

Remarks/Arguments

This application has been further considered in light of the Final Office Action mailed February 20, 2009. Claims 1-8, 11-15, 14, 18, 19, 21, 22 and 24-28 have been rejected as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over a combination of the teachings of Faase, US Patent 5,411,061 when considered in view of Wagner, US Patent 1,142,290. The Examiner has indicated that claims 9, 10, 16, 17, 20 and 23 would be allowed if amended to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The combination suggested by the Examiner has been considered, however, it is respectfully submitted that the references do not teach or anticipate the currently claimed invention as set for in either claims 1 or 24. In the reference to Faase, a heddle frame is disclosed having two cross members or slats 12 and two vertical struts or end braces 14. Each end brace includes an inwardly extending foot 18 that is engaged by a clamp block 32 mounted with the adjacent slat. Each clamp block is moved to engage or force the foot 18 of an adjacent end brace by use of an adjustment bolt 24 that extends through the adjacent slat. The force that the clamp block places on the foot is directed directly toward the thickened edge 22 of the slat and there is no force directly radially toward the side walls of the

slat. This action is explained at column 5, lines 62 to column 6, line 22 of the reference.

In view of the foregoing, there is no structural need in the heddle frame of Faase to provide a ring member around the joint between the slat and the foot of the end brace as the edge 22 is much greater thickness than the remainder of the side walls of the slat, see 3A-C and 4, and thus resists such force.

With the structure of the heald disclosed in the present application, the cross-bars 22 are made of thinner materials to reduce weight and such materials are subject to being damaged at the high operating speeds of today's looms. As noted in the discussion of the related art in the present application at paragraphs [0003] to [0005], as the frames become lighter, the mechanical resistance of the cross-bars is reduced resulting in possible damage to the lateral walls of the cross-bar. To compensate for this, the invention provides a cross bar having substantially convex outer profiles that are reinforced by surrounding rings or hoops, see paragraph [0007] to [0008].

Further, it is respectfully submitted that the secondary reference to Wagner does not relate to an area of assembly between a cross-bar and a vertical strut of a heddle frame.

Wagner does not disclose any strut that is functionally equivalent to those of the claimed invention or the end braces of Faase. The members "D" of Wagner are mounted over the shafts "A" but do not provide for any reinforcement of a joint between a vertical strut and a cross-bar, as is taught by the structure of the present invention. There are no forces being exerted radially outwardly from the shafts "A" which would require any reinforcement, as is necessary with the heald frames disclosed in the present application.

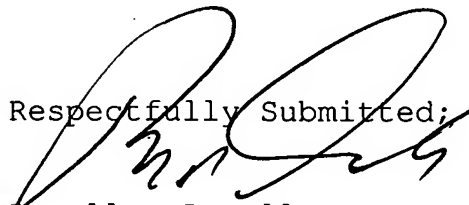
In Wagner, the members "D" are actually heddle supports that are mounted in pairs on the upper and lower shafts "A", see column 1, beginning at line 47, to suspend the heddle bars "B". As such, the members "D" are only connectors and there is no teaching in the reference of the members providing any function to reinforce or offset forces directed outwardly from an inside of a hollow end portion of a cross-bar caused by securing elements disposed with the end portions of such cross-bars, as is the function of the hoops of the presently claimed invention.

If one of ordinary skill in the art were to incorporate the teachings of Wagner with Faase, the "D" member would be used to suspend or connect another component to the slat of Faase and not to reinforce an outer open end of a cross-bar or offset outwardly

directed forces from within an outer open end of a cross-bar, as is the case with the present invention.

In view of the foregoing, the present invention is clearly distinguishable over the references, not only in structure, but also as to functionality. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) and allowance of the claims is solicited. In the event the Examiner has any questions regarding the allowability of the claims, an interview with the Examiner is requested after Final as a request was timely made before the Final action was issued as part of applicants response to the prior non-final office action.

Respectfully Submitted;



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